

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (original) In combination:

a modular sleeve for interfacing modular enhancements to a firearm, said firearm having minimally a receiver with a stock and barrel attached thereto, said barrel defining the forward portion of the firearm and said stock defining the rearward portion of the firearm, said firearm longitudinal axis being defined as horizontal and running from said stock through said receiver to said barrel, said receiver having a forward portion, a top and a rearward portion, said barrel being joined to the forward portion of the receiver, said stock being joined to the rearward portion of the receiver, said barrel being detachable secured to a screw-threaded barrel port on said receiver forward portion by means of a barrel nut having a generally cylindrical body with a central longitudinal threaded opening permitting the nut to be slid over the firearm barrel, said barrel nut threaded opening adapted to engage the screw-threaded barrel port, said barrel nut having a forward end with a plurality of prongs protruding radially outward from the barrel nut body, said modular sleeve comprising:

a universal receiver sleeve having a top side, an underside and two opposite sides connecting said top side with said underside, said universal receiver sleeve being further defined as having a forward portion and a rear portion, the underside of the rear portion of the universal receiver sleeve being fixedly attached to the firearm receiver top, said receiver sleeve forward portion extended forward above the firearm barrel;

an upper handguard piece having a front, rear, top, open bottom, opposing sides, outer side surfaces and inner side surfaces, said top, sides and bottom defining a hollow interior, said front and rear defining an upper handguard piece longitudinal axis,

said upper handguard piece top being joined to the underside of the forward portion of the receiver sleeve, each said outer side surface having two longitudinal channels formed therein, a large and shallow upper channel and a bottom interface channel, said channels being separated by a longitudinal element, said bottom interface channel being positioned near to the upper hand guard piece bottom, said upper handguard piece having a small, circular horizontal aperture formed through each upper hand guard piece side near to the rear in the bottom interface channel;

a bottom handguard piece having a front, rear, open top, bottom, opposing sides, outer side surfaces and inner side surfaces, said bottom, sides and top defining a hollow interior, said front and rear defining a bottom handguard piece longitudinal axis, said bottom handguard piece being removably attached to the upper handguard piece;

wherein, said upper handguard piece and attached bottom handguard piece surround the firearm barrel without touching said barrel;

a modular sleeve yoke, comprising:

a U-shaped device having two upright elements interconnected by a curvilinear element, said device having a top, bottom, front, rear and two opposite sides, said curvilinear element containing said device bottom, said upright elements terminating at the device top, said upright elements being generally rectangular block-like elements protruding forwardly away from said device rear, each upright element having two sides, each upright element having at least one threaded, lateral aperture formed therethrough, said device rear having a channel flange formed on the curvilinear element at the device bottom opening upward;

wherein, said device rear is positioned at and against the forward end of the barrel nut, said device adapted to engage the barrel nut body while the channel flange a plurality of prongs;

a threaded screw inserted through each upper handguard piece small, circular horizontal aperture for threaded engagement with each device upright element threaded, lateral aperture.

2. (original) The combination as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

an indentation formed about one side of each said device, upright element, threaded, lateral aperture, each said indentation adapted to receive a screw head.

3. (original) The combination as recited in claim 2, further comprising:

a rectangular notch formed in the channel flange at the device bottom.

4. (original) The combination as recited in claim 3, wherein:

said firearm has a conventional handguard delta ring, a delta ring spring, and a delta ring lock washer, mounted on said screw-threaded barrel port;

wherein said delta ring substantially covers the barrel nut and a portion of the special yoke.

5. (original) The combination as recited in claim 4, wherein:

said barrel nut and modular sleeve yoke are each made from steel.

6. (original) In combination:

a modular sleeve for interfacing modular enhancements to a firearm, said firearm having minimally a receiver with a stock and barrel attached thereto, said barrel defining the forward portion of the firearm and said stock defining the rearward portion of the firearm, said firearm longitudinal axis being defined as horizontal and running from said stock through said receiver to said barrel, said receiver having a forward portion, a top and a rearward portion, said barrel being joined to the forward portion of the receiver, said stock being joined to the rearward portion of the receiver, said barrel being detachable secured to a screw-threaded barrel port on said receiver forward portion by means of a barrel nut having a generally cylindrical body with a central longitudinal threaded opening permitting the nut to be slid over the firearm barrel, said barrel nut threaded opening adapted to engage the screw-threaded barrel port, said barrel nut having a forward end with a plurality of prongs protruding radially outward from the barrel nut body, said modular sleeve comprising:

a universal receiver sleeve having a top side, an underside and two opposite sides connecting said top side with said underside, said universal receiver sleeve being further defined as having a forward portion and a rear portion, the underside of the rear portion of the universal receiver sleeve being fixedly attached to the firearm receiver top, said receiver sleeve forward portion extended forward above the firearm barrel;

an upper handguard piece having a front, rear, top, open bottom, opposing sides, outer side surfaces and inner side surfaces, said top, sides and bottom defining a hollow interior, said front and rear defining an upper handguard piece longitudinal axis, said upper handguard piece top being joined to the underside of the forward portion of the receiver sleeve, each said outer side surface having two longitudinal channels

formed therein, a large and shallow upper channel and a bottom interface channel, said channels being separated by a longitudinal element, said bottom interface channel being positioned near to the upper hand guard piece bottom, said upper handguard piece having a small, circular vertical aperture formed through the longitudinal element along each upper hand guard piece side near to the upper handguard piece rear, said upper hand guard piece side having a notch formed along the bottom at the rear;

a bottom handguard piece having a front, rear, open top, bottom, opposing sides, outer side surfaces and inner side surfaces, said bottom, sides and top defining a hollow interior, said front and rear defining a bottom handguard piece longitudinal axis, said bottom handguard piece being removably attached to the upper handguard piece;

wherein, said upper handguard piece and attached bottom handguard piece surround the firearm barrel without touching said barrel;

a modular sleeve yoke, comprising:

a U-shaped device having two upright elements interconnected by a curvilinear element, said device having a top, bottom, front, rear and two opposite sides, said curvilinear element containing said device bottom, said upright elements terminating at the device top, said upright elements having generally rectangular block-like elements protruding laterally sideways, each laterally protruding block-like elements having a top with at least one threaded, vertical aperture formed there through, said device rear having a channel flange formed on the curvilinear element at the device bottom opening upward;

wherein, said device rear is positioned at and against the forward end of the barrel nut, said device adapted to engage the barrel nut body while the channel flange a plurality of prongs;

a threaded screw inserted through each upper handguard piece small, circular vertical aperture for threaded engagement with each device upright element protruding block-like element threaded, vertical aperture;

wherein, each the top of each laterally protruding block-like element engages each upper hand guard piece side notch.

7. (original) The combination as recited in claim 6, further comprising:

an indentation formed on the top of each laterally protruding block-like element said device, about each threaded, vertical aperture.

8. (original) The combination as recited in claim 7, further comprising:

a rectangular notch formed in the channel flange at the device bottom.

9. (original) The combination as recited in claim 8, wherein:

said firearm has a conventional handguard delta ring, a delta ring spring, and a delta ring lock washer, mounted on said screw-threaded barrel port;

wherein said delta ring substantially covers the barrel nut and a portion of the special yoke.

10. (original) The combination as recited in claim 9, wherein:

said barrel nut and modular sleeve yoke are each made from steel.

11. (newly added) In combination:

a sleeve for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm, said firearm having a receiver, said receiver having a forward portion, a top and a rearward portion, a barrel detachably secured to said forward portion of said receiver and a stock being joined to the rearward portion of the receiver, said sleeve comprising:

a universal receiver sleeve having a top side, a bottom side, two opposite sides, a forward portion and a rear portion, wherein the bottom side of the rear portion of the universal receiver sleeve is configured to be fixedly attached to the top of said firearm receiver and said forward portion of said receiver sleeve is configured to extend above at least a portion of the firearm barrel, and

a handguard piece depending from the bottom side of the forward portion of the receiver sleeve, said handguard piece having a side wall that forms a hollow interior cavity, a forward end, a rearward end and threaded apertures in said rearward end of said sidewalls, wherein said sidewall of said handguard piece surrounds the firearm barrel without touching said barrel with said rearward end of said handguard adjacent said forward portion of said receiver when said receiver sleeve is attached to said firearm receiver;

a stabilizing element affixed to the forward portion of the receiver, wherein said stabilizing element extends forwardly into said rearward end of said handguard piece; and

a fastener received into said threaded aperture, said fastener engaging said handguard and said stabilizing element.

12. (newly added) The combination of claim 11, wherein said barrel is detachably secured to a screw-threaded barrel port on said forward portion of said receiver and said

stabilizing element is affixed to said receiver by engaging said screw-threaded barrel port.

13. (newly added) The combination of claim 11, wherein the handguard piece and receiver sleeve forward portion are integrated into one piece.

14. (newly added) The combination of claim 11, further comprising:
a plurality of apertures formed in the sidewall of said handguard piece.

15. (newly added) The combination of claim 11, further comprising:
an auxiliary dovetail interface element on the top of said universal receiver sleeve, said auxiliary dovetail element having a cross-sectional dovetail shape adapted for the mounting of ancillary equipment.

16. (newly added) The combination of claim 15, further comprising:
at least one auxiliary dovetail interface element on the sidewall of said handguard piece, said auxiliary dovetail element having a cross-sectional dovetail shape adapted for the mounting of ancillary equipment.

17. (newly added) The combination of claim 16, said at least one auxiliary dovetail interface element comprising:
three auxiliary dovetail interface elements on the sidewall of said handguard piece.

18. (newly added) A combination of claim 15, wherein said auxiliary dovetail interface is a male weaver type interface.

19. (newly added) A sleeve for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm, said firearm having a receiver, said receiver having a forward portion, a top and a rearward portion, a barrel joined to the forward portion of the receiver and a stock being joined to the rearward portion of the receiver, said sleeve comprising:

- a universal receiver sleeve having a top side, a bottom side, two opposite sides, a forward portion and a rear portion, wherein the bottom side of the rear portion of the universal receiver sleeve is configured to include a receiver dovetail interface element, said receiver dovetail interface element having an interior surface with a standard dovetail configuration for securing the universal receiver sleeve rear portion to the receiver top and said forward portion of said receiver sleeve is configured to extend above at least a portion of the firearm barrel;

- an auxiliary dovetail interface element on the top side of the universal receiver sleeve, said auxiliary dovetail element having a cross-sectional dovetail shape adapted for the mounting of ancillary equipment;

- a handguard piece depending from the bottom side of the forward portion of the receiver sleeve, said handguard piece having a side wall that forms a hollow interior cavity, a forward end and a rearward end, wherein, said sidewall of said handguard piece surrounds the firearm barrel without touching said barrel with said rearward end adjacent said forward portion of said receiver when said receiver sleeve is attached to said firearm receiver;

- a stabilizing element affixed to the forward portion of the receiver, wherein said stabilizing element extends forwardly into said rearward end of said handguard piece; and

a fastener received into said threaded aperture, said fastener engaging said handguard and said stabilizing element.

20. (newly added) The combination of claim 19, wherein said barrel is detachably secured to a screw-threaded barrel port on said forward portion of said receiver and said stabilizing element is affixed to said receiver by engaging said screw-threaded barrel port.

21. (newly added) The modular sleeve of claim 19, wherein the handguard piece, said receiver sleeve and said auxiliary dovetail interface element are integrated into one piece.

22. (newly added) The modular sleeve of claim 19, further comprising:
a plurality of apertures formed in the sidewall of said handguard piece.

23. (newly added) A modular sleeve as recited in claim 19, wherein said auxiliary dovetail interface is a male weaver type interface.

24. (newly added) A modular sleeve of claim 19, further comprising:
a plurality of transverse notches formed in the auxiliary dovetail interface element, each said notch having a substantially rectangular cross section.

25. (newly added) A modular sleeve as recited in claim 19, further comprising:
a plurality of apertures in said auxiliary dovetail interface element, said apertures adapted to receive a screw.

26. (newly added) A sleeve system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm, said firearm including an upper receiver having a forward portion and a top, and further including a barrel joined to the forward portion of the upper receiver, said sleeve system comprising:

a receiver sleeve having a top, a bottom, a forward portion and a rear portion wherein the bottom of the rear portion of the receiver sleeve is configured and arranged to be fixedly received over the top of said upper receiver, and said forward portion of said receiver sleeve is configured to extend in spaced relation above at least a portion of the barrel of the firearm;

a handguard fixedly attached to the forward portion of the receiver sleeve and having sidewalls that define a hollow interior cavity, said handguard having a forward end, and a rearward end wherein said sidewalls of said handguard surround the barrel without touching the barrel, said rearward end of said handguard being adjacent said forward portion of said upper receiver when said receiver sleeve is attached to said firearm;

a stabilizing element having a rear portion affixed to the forward portion of the upper receiver and a front portion that extends forwardly within said rearward end of said handguard; and

a fastener extending through said sidewall of said rearward end of said handguard and engaging said stabilizing element to secure said handguard relative to said stabilizing element.

27. (newly added) A sleeve system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm, said firearm including an upper receiver having a forward portion and a top with

a dovetail interface, said firearm further including a barrel joined to the forward portion of the upper receiver, said sleeve system comprising::

a stabilizing element having a rear portion affixed to the forward portion of the upper receiver and a front portion that extends forwardly therefrom;

a receiver sleeve having a top, a bottom, a forward portion and a rear portion wherein the bottom of the rear portion of the receiver sleeve is dovetail interface configured and arranged to be slidably received over the dovetail interface of said upper receiver, and said forward portion of said receiver sleeve is configured to extend in spaced relation above at least a portion of the barrel of the firearm;

a handguard fixedly attached to the forward portion of the receiver sleeve and having sidewalls that define a hollow interior cavity, said handguard having a forward end, and a rearward end which is disposed adjacent said forward portion of said upper receiver when said receiver sleeve is attached to said firearm, said sidewalls of said handguard surrounding the barrel without touching the barrel, said front portion of said stabilizing element extending forwardly within said rearward end of said handguard when said receiver sleeve is attached to said firearm; and

a fastener engaging said sidewall of said rearward end of said handguard and further engaging said stabilizing element to secure said handguard relative to said stabilizing element.